

7 THE WANDERERS

7.1 Introduction

¹By the term “wanderer” are meant all those who intentionally progress on the way to the fifth natural kingdom. They are all united by their knowledge of the way, their awareness of the goal, their work for self-realization, their service of their fellow men, and their realization of the significance of the group and of the laws governing it. It is true that this knowledge and awareness, this work and service, and this realization are of very different quality in the individuals according to the distance they have travelled on the way. What they all need, however, is knowledge of what is required of them for their next stage, what hindrances they have to overcome within themselves. In the following, a material is presented to all those who know that they are such wanderers and want to move ahead – no matter the cost.

²The term “wanderer” also denotes those monads who did not causalize on Earth, but who have arrived from other planets. Often these individuals possess a latent understanding of esoteric truths, having learnt them on other planets, where esoteric schools are not forced to lead such obscure lives as they do on Earth, but on the contrary have a central function in human societies and so wield a strong influence on people. These wanderers usually have a strong sense of alienation when faced with all the perverseness there is in human life on this our globe. They have an instinctive certainty telling them that the knowledge must exist somewhere, and so they seek it until they find it.

7.2 Wrong Attitudes to the Study

¹The disciple has the task, not of scaling down the knowledge to his level, but of raising his own level, so that he is able to receive the knowledge with the import the teacher afforded it. In this connection recall Goethe’s definition of culture (or education, in German: Bildung): “The capacity to receive something in the spirit in which it was said.”

²Three ways or kinds of learning:

³The way of the slave: He who memorizes a material and may follow it slavishly. He may regard himself as a student or even as a scholar.

⁴The way of the scholar: He accumulates material according to his own desire and may subject it to criticism in the manner in which he has been suggested by authorities to believe to be right.

⁵The way of the wise man: He is able to extract from the material the real facts it contains. He derives no pleasure from memorizing or from praise for his good memory. He studies only what is of importance for him and his task, not what others have drilled him to consider important. In so doing he finds material of the most valuable content, which comes from the truth and guides him back to it.

⁶Much of what the teacher says the disciple deems obvious, “so obvious that it need not even be said”. Here the disciple is in error. What the teacher says must be obvious to him at the moment it is being said or soon afterwards. If not, he has received the teaching too early, and so it remains for him to have that experience in the light of which what was said will be obvious. There are two truths that go unheeded by the disciple in this process. First: it was not obvious to him before the teacher said it, and thus there is a big difference between before and after. Second: the disciple is not a unitary being (if he were, he would not need discipleship); he “is not one, but many”; and the personality that understands the teaching to be right is soon enough changed for other personalities that do not. In particular, when he is in the world outside the school, he “is someone else”, one who in his doing and talking to other people shows that he has forgotten what he learnt. The teacher’s teaching does not aim at making him understand and see only in the teaching situation, where the disciple is in his work per-

sonality, but in all situations and above all in “ordinary reality”.

⁷Generally, the efforts esoteric students make to understand the teaching are too weak. That being the case, they deny themselves a deeper, more comprehensive understanding. The weakness of effort shows in the fact that they ask too little, ask without thinking, ask the wrong questions, or formulate their questions in a vague, unclear manner. When questions are not formulated clearly, the teacher has to extract out of the student, step by step, what he is actually getting at. Students need to put more effort in asking more and asking better. Intellectual laziness never was a path to knowledge and understanding.

⁸When something in the teaching strikes you as being correct, you need not think much about it. Most people concentrate on whatever they agree with, and that is why they do not learn as much as they otherwise would. However, when something in the teaching strikes us as being strange or even unacceptable, we should pay especial attention to it, reflect upon it with great care. Because it almost always means that a true lesson has struck against some prejudice of ours, which tries to beat it back and so keep us in our self-made prison of thought.

⁹In this connection, prejudice keeps its original meaning of “judgements passed before examination”. Nowadays, to many people the word “prejudice” has degenerated into meaning “view which I or my group do not like”. This is true in particular of so-called cultural radicals.

¹⁰Pupil: “Why am I still confused, although I have studied for so long?” Teacher: “Because you do not seek intellectual clarity and order.” Pupil: “But that is precisely what I am doing!” Teacher: “No. Intellectual clarity and order is the inevitable result, if studies are pursued in the proper manner.” You have to study the knowledge according to its own principles, just like in practical life you have to wander the way as it lies there. If you study in a selective manner, picking out whatever fascinates you in a shallow way, skipping the ‘boring stuff’, the result must be confusion. If you then persist in doing so, confusion turns into a habit and finally your second nature. The condition actually resembles that of certain chronically ill people who have become so used to their illness, so adapted themselves to it, that they really do not want to be well.”

¹¹Attraction to esoteric study may be a good thing as a motive power, but is insufficient in itself. Many people believe that their interest or desire is preparation enough. They hear about a teaching, and what they hear attracts them. They assume that they must contact this teaching at once. What they assume here is that they can learn at once, and in the manner and in the order they decide themselves.

¹²To perceive one’s own nothingness is valuable. To revel in emotions of one’s own insignificance, uselessness, etc., is a cheap but useless form of self-gratification.

¹³All wishes and desires do not go against the will to learn, but some do.

¹⁴People want continuity, what they call “order”, that is to say, things they recognize. However, this desire easily stifles the will to learn.

¹⁵Discipleship cannot be a remedy for loneliness.

7.3 Success in Study

¹Question: Is there any rule-of-thumb way of telling whether oneself or another person is serious in his esoteric study and can be successful in the esoteric way?

²Answer: Yes, there is. Serious people are prepared to start at the beginning and take a step at a time, not skipping the “elementary stuff” to pounce on the “advanced things” at once.

³The factor most of all favouring this undesirable tendency is vanity. That is why most systems stress humility. It is not a virtue as much as it is a quality the disciple needs in order to be able to learn.

⁴Progress in study comes through capacity to learn, and is irresistible. Nothing can stand as an obstacle between you and the knowledge, if you are ripe for it. This also means that

anything, even the least essential thing, can stand as an obstacle between you and the knowledge, if you are not ripe for it.

⁵Therefore, the teacher makes himself or the knowledge – or both – difficult of access in various ways. In so doing he protects the unworthy and the unripe from contacting a knowledge which could only harm them. The worthy and the ripe, on the other hand, cannot under any circumstances be repelled but temporarily. Therefore, half-awake junior disciples make the teacher and the teaching a disservice by trying to attract the unripe to the teaching or to keep the unwilling by smoothing over unsympathetic aspects of the teacher or teaching, “sugar-coating the bitter pills”, etc.

7.4 The Disciple’s Attitude to the Teacher

¹What the student takes as attractive or even the teacher makes appear attractive perhaps is not at all intended to be so. What attracts the student to the teaching or the teacher may be such things as the teacher has put there as an indicator by which he tests the suitability or unsuitability of the disciples.

²To those who tend to get irritated about traits of the teacher’s personality, mode of presentation, style, etc., it may be pointed out that it is the task of the teacher to be at the service of those who are able to learn, not to be a nice or pleasant person to those who primarily seek what is nice and pleasant.

7.5 Criticism

¹Enduring the criticism of others may be part of doing good to them. Think: “Let them have their criticism, what concern is it of mine?” How about improving the quality of criticism, so that it can be more useful? Most so-called criticism is so bad that even undesirable things are not criticised efficiently.

²“The evil of another person can be averted; there is no escape from one’s own.”

³According to an old observation, criticism has to go through three stages. The first stage: It is impossible, fraud, delusion, etc. The second stage: It is possible, true, and right, but it is unimportant. The third stage: It is important, but we knew this all the time. Then criticism can stop.

7.6 Criticism of Teachers

¹Esoteric teachers, appearing in public, are always criticised, blamed, accused of the most terrible things of which contemporary people can conceive, trumpeted as the worst among fools and miscreants. So it has always been, and so it will remain until a leading portion of mankind has reached the higher mental stage.

²Some disciples are very upset about such criticism, try to defend the teacher and counter the criticism. This is not only a waste of energy and time, but also quite erroneous action. The teacher does not in the least concern himself with those who from injudicious zeal try to defend him before the moralists. On the contrary, it may happen that he pulls his weight, “putting some more wood on the fire”. H.P. Blavatsky was a teacher of that category. Criticism from without is a tool, which such a teacher will use in his work with people. If he is a real teacher, he makes the most of any situation, using it to teach by it. If some of his disciples flee like scared rabbits when criticism is raging, returning crestfallen when it is dead calm again, then they have been put to the test without their knowing it, and thanks to this the teacher knows more about them than he knew before. Eruptions of public criticism against the teacher are like the storms in early autumn. They shake the apple-tree, so that the rotten fruit falls to the ground, while the fresh and good fruit remains in the tree.

³Criticism from without never does any harm. Criticism from within, from a disciple, always harms, and the disciple himself most of all. It may be useful only in so far as its

demonstrates the disciple's immaturity, bad judgement, and general lack of civility. Therefore the teacher can use such a disciple as a warning example for some time, before he dismisses him from the teaching.

7.7 The Disciple Needs to Study Himself

¹Knowledge consists in the intended relation between the teacher's consciousness and the disciples' consciousness. Where, then, lies the fault, if the disciples do not learn? Does it lie with the teacher, the knowledge, or the disciples?

²It appears that the disciple needs to study not only the teaching, but also himself. He needs to see through what is hindering him from learning, discover which changes of his attitudes he needs to make to help himself to learn.

7.8 Some Themes for the Study of Oneself

¹Here follow twenty themes for the study of oneself.

²1. Any kind of study may start with the student's demand for attention. However the study starts, it must not continue in that manner.

³2. Study the assumptions behind your actions. Then study the assumptions behind your assumptions.

⁴3. "Why did I do that?" may be a good question to ask. But you could also ask the question, and sometimes it is even more important: "How otherwise could I have done it?"

⁵4. You have come a long way, but you do not know how long. You have a long way to go, but you do not know how long.

⁶5. Compared to some, you have advanced. Compared to others, you have not progressed at all. Neither is truer than the other.

⁷6. If your desire for "good" is based on greed, it is not good, but greed.

⁸7. Exercise power by means of kindness, and you may be causing more damage than you could by strictness. Neither is right in itself.

⁹8. Anyone who knows must discharge a function. Anyone who does not, cannot arrogate one to himself; he can only try to do so.

¹⁰9. Do not try to be humble; learn humility.

¹¹10. Assume that you are part-hypocrite and part heedless, and you will not be far wrong.

¹²11. To copy a virtue in another is more copying than it is virtue. Try to learn what that virtue is based upon.

¹³12. No practice exists in isolation.

¹⁴13. If you seek a teacher, try to become a real student. If you want to be a student, try to find a real teacher.

¹⁵14. The more often you do a thing, the more likely you are to do it again. There is no certainty that you will gain anything else from repetition than a likelihood of further repetition.

¹⁶15. At first, you are not worthy of the insignia and external marks of the disciple. Later you do not need them. Finally you may need them for the sake of others.

¹⁷16. If you cannot laugh frequently and genuinely, you have no "soul".

¹⁸17. When a belief becomes more than an instrument, you are lost. You remain lost until you learn what "belief" is really for.

¹⁹18. When a teacher or senior disciple shows interest in your material welfare, you may be pleased. But it is often because you are not ready for any other help than this.

²⁰19. When someone asks for you to help in doing something, you perhaps imagine that it is because he cannot do it without your aid. Perhaps he is a disciple who wants to help you by connecting you with this work.

²¹20. If you are lazy, count yourself lucky if someone points this out, giving you a chance to

improve. Laziness is always your own fault. It is the sign that a man has persevered in uselessness for too long.

²²The above points 1–20 are in fact exercises in outwitting the false personality, which thrives on giving itself small rewards.

²³The false personality says: “Give me what I desire!” The true essence says: “Give me what I need!”

²⁴The false personality places itself between the study and the individual’s essence whose growth is the true purpose of the study.

7.9 The Teacher is Needed – There is no Practice without a Teacher

¹Some higher faculties and modes of perception may certainly ripen in a person who works alone, but the individual as a harmonious whole cannot ripen alone, because the wanderer does not know in which direction he is to walk. If he starts wandering in this state of ignorance, he cannot know where he is headed. Every step he takes may remove him further from the goal. In the beginning, too, he inevitably is at the mercy of his own weaknesses. Should he succeed in developing certain powers, those weaknesses are intensified as well. In consequence of this, he grows weaker, not stronger. This is true of everyone. The difference, where an accepted disciple is concerned, is that the teacher has undertaken to protect the disciple from certain aspects of the latter’s own weakness.

²In old esoteric writings, non-transformed man is likened to an animal possessing faculties it cannot yet use right. “The more animal” a man is, the less he understands the role of the teacher. The teacher may appear to him as a hunter who wants to force him into a cage. He makes mechanical, instinctive resistance to the teacher’s attempts at imparting knowledge to him.

³You are attracted to a certain teacher principally because of an intuitive perception of spiritual kinship, a perception that generally is not fully conscious. The esoterically ignorant may put forward their explanations invoking so-called rational factors, but they are of secondary importance.

7.10 Tasks of the Teacher

¹Understanding goes from universals to particulars, from the greater to the lesser, from the higher to the lower, from the whole to its parts. The corresponding is true of the teacher’s ability to teach and guide. He is able to, since only the one who has walked the way in its full length can guide another one on it. He alone can survey it all, see it from the beginning to the end and from the end to the beginning.

²The teacher has the task of opening up the consciousness of the disciple, so that the latter can be receptive to higher impressions. To become receptive the disciple must see how much of his ordinary thinking is clogged with simplistic patterns and erroneous assumptions. Until he has had these insights, he cannot really understand.

³The teacher has the task of being himself, of radiating his being. Therefore, there is in the teacher no division into a public and a private personality. Such a person as shows one face in the classroom and another face at home cannot be an esoteric teacher. This oneness rules his inner being. His external behaviour may change, but his inner personality is unitary.

⁴The teacher teaches with all his being. To make the disciple see that he has a fault that is hindering him, the teacher may behave as though he had this fault himself. In so doing he applies the old psychological insight that it is easier to see the faults of other people than those of oneself.

⁵Of particular importance is that part of the teacher’s teaching which has the function of setting the disciple free from such beliefs as are part and parcel of his cultural background, the creeds and lies that any human society has established and given its official sanction. Truth

cannot be built in a consciousness that in any essential respect is dominated by beliefs and lies. It sometimes may happen, when the teacher tries to set him free from such a belief, that the disciple gets into such a state of shock that he will be unfit for study for a certain time. But that only means that this was a necessary experience for the disciple.

⁶The teacher strives to supply his disciples with a rich and diversified material, which in all its parts is designed for one single purpose: to develop consciousness. One part of this material appears constructive. Another part seems destructive, but that is a superficial view. It would be better to say that it is reconstructive, since the old must be pulled down before the new can be built. Everything in due proportion is a secret skill of the teacher.

⁷Therefore, the teacher performs many tasks, or functions. Being a guide, he leads the way, but the disciple must walk it himself. Being a philosopher, he loves wisdom, which is what the word “philosophy” originally means. However, this love of his means action, not revelling in egoistic emotions. Emancipated from sentimentality, love rather manifests itself as will, not as emotion. It is unifying energy without reference to one’s self.

⁸The teacher is the necessary link between the disciple and the goal. He embodies and symbolizes both the work itself, of which he is a product, and the continuity of the system, the tradition, or the chain of teachers. Just as the officer for all practical purposes symbolizes to the private soldier the government and its aims, so the teacher symbolizes the entire planetary hierarchy.

⁹The old saw, “the craftsman is hidden in his workshop”, means that the teacher is one with the work.

¹⁰The teacher has the task of provoking experiences that enable the disciple to receive higher impressions, higher knowledge. His task is not only that of conveying information.

¹¹The teacher has the task of communicating truth and reality. He has to reduce, not increase, the effect of his own personality, in favour of content. The teacher has not the task of being a psychotherapist. But he is there to give protection and guidance.

¹²The teacher is kind to some people seeking him and strict to others. Those who are the objects of his kindness feel flattered and deem themselves special elects. They should not, however. The real state of affairs is the opposite and is connected with what the teacher can give. To people who cannot learn the teacher can give his kindness only. People who can learn, however, must sometimes be given a more definite, a firmer guidance, and this they may mistake for strictness.

¹³The teacher tests the suitability of a disciple by finding out whether he can set aside the fixation upon a certain technique, person, or school, and make himself open to receive a comprehensive teaching.

7.11 The Personality of the Teacher

¹The fact that ordinary man plays various social roles has become such a deeply rooted phenomenon in the present civilization that it has become generally accepted and is not looked upon as a bad thing. From the esoteric point of view, however, it is human immaturity.

²The actor who becomes one with his part cannot be an esoteric teacher. The professional man who is carried away by his official role so that he has another personality during office hours cannot be an esoteric teacher. The function of the teacher cannot be performed by anyone who is temporarily obsessed by playing a part.

³The esoteric teacher cannot be a world-renowned figure who attracts millions of followers. The degree of awakening he has attained is perceptible only to anyone who is awakened himself. Like a radio receiver man can pick up only what comes within his frequency range. The man who is fascinated and impressed by the personality of the teacher is incapable of using this impression for an expedient purpose. Man in development can only faintly descry the qualities and abilities belonging to the stage above his own. The teacher may even shut off the

greater part of his radiation where the disciple is concerned, for the disciple does not need it, cannot use it. The bat is helped by a faint light only; sunlight would blind it.

⁴Thus the teacher must be a unitary person. However, the inner unity of his personality does not correspond to the notions of the spiritual ideal man held by superficial moralism. The calm, immutable personality, the reserved, awe-inspiring type who never displays agitation, cannot be a teacher. For what is static, immutable is the opposite of what is alive, and is useless in a life sense. Through exercise an individual may have reached such a condition, but in so doing has actually deprived himself of resources of expression by which he could reach other people. Then he has restricted, not enlarged, his field of activity and sphere of influence. Just as everything else, qualities and abilities are valuable to the extent that they enable man to achieve something. Nothing is an end in itself. Impassivity can be a tool, but nothing more. And like all tools it is useful only in situations where it is expedient.

7.12 The Teacher is Independent of Moral Fictionalism

¹To demonstrate the uselessness of moralism to his pupils, the teacher may do and say things that shock the pupils, such things as they have been hypnotized to regard as morally reprehensible. In so doing the teacher wants to point out to the pupils that what shocks them is not evil in itself, but their conventional, illusory view of evil. "What upsets people are not things but views on things."

²Senior disciples may adopt similar patterns of behaviour, but then for other purposes. In this case their aim is to set themselves free from remaining illusions such as the demand for being liked, esteemed, appreciated in society. It is a necessary process to make oneself completely indifferent to, and uninfluenced by, moral illusionism, and there are many valuable qualities that can be acquired only after this has been done.

7.13 The Group

¹Question: It is rather the rule than the exception that esoteric study and work groups are not efficient, that they fail in their task, and disband rather soon. Could something be said about what the causes of this inefficiency are and, conversely, what the characteristics of efficient esoteric groups are?

²Answer: Groups are inefficient in so far as they are made up of inefficient people. Such people are not prepared for work above all; they come to the meetings ill-prepared, if they come at all; they allow social needs to gain the upper hand; demand consideration; bring false personality into the group (by "false personality" is meant everything in the individual's personality that cannot further his consciousness development, can only hinder it; negative emotions, for example). Groups that are dominated by such individuals will soon disband, since the serious-minded members leave it.

³Conversely, groups are efficient in so far as they are made up of efficient people. Such people put the work in the centre of attention; view the group activity, including the meetings, as a commitment; make constant efforts from within their being; show each other due, but not too great and misdirected, consideration; leave false personality outside.

⁴The great peril in a study group is that it decays so as to become a miniature tribe or family, a cult and an outer frame in which people seek and find satisfactions of their social needs, such as company, acceptance, support, attention, appreciation, recognition, rewards, self-assertion, playing social games, etc. in infinitum. To counteract such tendencies, the leader of the group takes measures with the effect of reducing social features and personality factors and emphasizing the work done by the group and without which it would lack a *raison d'être*.

⁵The work of the group is in many respects an experiment: in esoteric common sense, intuition, and discrimination; in impersonality; in readiness to try and fail; in freedom to

choose and reject; in observation and application of techniques.

⁶Only the voluntary merging of individuals and groups motivated by common interest and aim is of value.

⁷People can benefit from group work only to the extent to which they have overcome the four: ingratitude in good fortune, impatience in ill fortune, discontent with their lot, hesitation in serving their fellow men.

7.14 Esoteric Leaders

¹Spiritual leaders must be able to stand alone, and they are always able to do so if they have the capacity for love. They must not let themselves be hindered by those who cannot keep up with the pace. Leaders must have a goal, a sense of proportion, be able to think clearly, possess humility and the ability of adaptation, feel sympathy for everybody within the sphere of their activity, avoid pedantry.

²Leaders must count on being blamed for failures of co-workers, on being attacked by all who expect too much, by those who are unable to see and understand, by all critics of all kinds who agitate public opinion.

³The leaders in the esoteric groups are automatically those who have the best orientation in esoterics. They give no orders, not even advice, to others in the groups, and they do not assert their own opinion. Their task is to supply facts and to help those who want information in order to orient themselves better and to form their own opinion. There are no dictators in higher kingdoms. There are always those who know more and are better able, but they give no instructions, just help those who desire clarity about how things are. The planetary ruler himself governs through his supreme insight and ability to clarify his greater knowledge of the Law, and he does not resort to the language of force.

7.15 Service

¹Discipleship means hard work, pioneering and guiding work. Many aspirants fail, since they fail to make the best they can do, fail to say what should be said, fail to do the work assigned by the circumstances.

²There are two levels of human service, a lower and a higher one. On the lower level, man does what he can. On the higher level, he does what the need indicates. Then, of course, there is the level where he does what he derives pleasure from, but that is not service.

³People without insight, “idealists” for example, must constantly work at their own projects on account of two traits that true esoteric workers do not have: fixation and ignorance of the real results of their action.

⁴Fixation always prevails when the man does not use the idea as an instrument, but the idea so to speak uses the man mechanically. “We are being played with by our own toys.” There are physical, emotional, and mental toys.

⁵You are not a unitary being, you are not one. You are “many”. One part of you says, “I want to learn how to serve”, whereas another part says, “I can serve now”.

⁶“Anyone who knows must discharge a function.” Therefore, if you do not discharge a function, it means that you do not know.

⁷“He is our disciple who does our work.”

7.16 The Aspirant

¹It is only when the individual enters reality and frees himself from emotional illusoriness and mental fictitiousness that he gets into contact with his superconscious and is more controlled by this than by his subconscious. It takes many lives before the subconscious has lost its power and the constantly recurring choice between lower and higher ceases. When it has ceased, man is an aspirant to the fifth natural kingdom.

²One thing which the aspirant must expect is complete and total disparagement. He must be absolutely indifferent to people's recognition, appreciation, understanding; absolutely invulnerable in all respects. He must be able to see how others forge ahead of him, not just in all human spheres but also in the planetary hierarchy, which is a greater test. He must be totally indifferent to such experiences as when others gain glory and wealth from his own work.

³The two greatest shortcomings in most aspirants are perhaps their lack of courage to dare and their psychological misjudgement of people.

⁴The most serious liability of the average aspirant is sloth or slowness.

⁵The aspirant to discipleship (as all esotericians are, even if they are unaware of it) must expect three particular strains. The first one is strain in his relation to the people about him (his family, friends, work). There is a constant tension in always keeping an unshaken balance between necessary adaptation and refusal to compromise. The second strain is in relation to Augoeides. This implies a constant attention to hints, "impressions", also energies, which otherwise will pass him by unobservedly. The third strain concerns the individual's circumstances and tasks as a social being, his contribution to development.

⁶Eager aspirants and junior disciples, those in particular who have the first ray ruling in some one of their envelopes, are keen on pursuing some "project" of their own within the framework of the esoteric work. Their urge to action is good in itself, but should be given a better direction. They have to learn to perceive what kind of work, what "projects" are the most needed right now from the viewpoint of the teachers and the school.

⁷It is commonly seen that energetic aspirants and junior disciples throw themselves headlong into tasks, driven more by emotional enthusiasm than by mental consideration. They should meditate on the fact that by such "unenlightened" action they have not greater prospects of success in their ventures than ordinary people. That is not the manner in which to demonstrate that they have studied and taken a special interest in the consciousness aspect or the "manifestation of cosmic intelligence in mankind".

⁸All these eager and energetic people have much to gain by carefully studying the "science of preparation", the decisive importance of intelligent preparation. Therefore: the better you have prepared a certain work, the higher the quality of consciousness, of knowledge you put to use in it, the better it will be. Furthermore: Never make decisions when in a state of doubt, uncertainty, in a lower degree of consciousness. Always make the important decisions in moments of consciousness and presence of yourself. Never make important decisions in situations forced upon you by circumstances (pushy people, etc.), but rather postpone them till later, when you will be able to take a calm overview of the situation.

⁹A faculty that the majority of aspirants should make efforts to develop is that of exact perception. Ordinary, untransformed man has not learnt how to observe things, and even less how to observe exactly. Anyone paying attention enough may experience this daily, for example by listening how people report what they have heard or read. Usually they mix their own mechanical views, conclusions, expectations into their observations, so that the result is something quite different from what was there objectively. In other words: Between the observed things and the observing consciousness there is "normally" a "fog" of collective and individual fictions and illusions. This "fog" explains why witnesses always disagree. The inability of exact, objective perception is a serious hindrance to all kinds of work, especially esoteric work, and must be overcome by anyone who wishes to be really efficient, anyone who wishes to learn how to do.

7.17 The Disciple

¹No disciple declares or even hints to an outsider that he is a disciple. No disciple identifies anyone else as a disciple. Disciples recognize one another without words and so need no outer declarations or signs. Those who "appoint" themselves or others disciples thus are deceivers

and reveal themselves as such by their chatter to those who know.

²In the new age, discipleship is not so much about the individual disciple's perfection as about the group's increasing efficiency in its work.

³The faults and failings of disciples are individually not important to the teacher except in so far as they lower the vibratory capacity of the group.

⁴The teacher: "Watch with care your thoughts about each other, and kill out at once all suspicion, all criticism and seek to hold each other unwaveringly in the light of love. You have no idea of the potency of such an effort or of its power to release each other's bonds and to life the group to an exceedingly high place. By the pure light of love for each other, you can draw nearer to me and to the teachers on the inner side of life."

⁵One basic quality is required: a persevering earnestness which nothing will deter.

⁶For the disciple there is no retiring from the world.

⁷A master is made through the achieving of mastery and not through obedience to any person.

⁸The disciple develops through adapting his life to the requirements of discipleship as far as is reasonably possible, not through adapting the requirements to his life. Flexibility within certain limits is always needed but that flexibility must not be set in motion by any first self inertia or mental questioning.

⁹There is always a need for humility. This involves a sense of right proportion, a balanced point of view, a dispassionate attitude, truthful recognition of merits as well as demerits. True humility is based on fact, on vision, and on time pressures.

¹⁰To become a disciple you must first of all have acquired so much experience of life that you can look upon life and people as the teacher does. This presupposes some knowledge of life.

¹¹To be able to become a disciple, the disciple must renounce his self-centredness, stop wanting to be someone, feeling important, superior, wanting to assert himself, wanting to be seen and recognized by others. Anyone who has seen the insufficiency of man, of the resources of the first self, is grateful for the opportunity of being a tool for a second self. Before you can become a second self, however, you must have been a tool for a second self, and such ones exist only in the planetary hierarchy. It is true that all first selves become second selves some time, but that normally presupposes a process of evolution that takes millions of years. Anyone who wants to speed that process up for himself can do so only by learning from a second self how to become one himself. And that means discipleship. Above all it means that the one who sets his mind on becoming a second self must cease being a first self. This has been said before in so many different ways. This is what true religion has tried to teach people with so pitiable results. The second self is a collective self and has ceased being a separate self. What remains of the first self in the second self is the very self-identity, nothing more. Besides, the second self is nothing but a server of life. Where the monad is concerned, the entire continued evolution is about being a disciple of members of ever higher kingdoms. In that sense, all higher life is a continuous discipleship lasting until the monad has reached its final goal.

¹²That individual who has definitively dedicated his life (with his future incarnations) to the service of evolution has relations to three kinds of groups: an "inner" group with which he is in telepathic rapport and an "outer" group made up of all those whom he is able to benefit in some way or other. The third group is the planetary hierarchy. By having opportunities of being informed of the hierarchy's plans, he discovers what contribution he may make himself. Without that knowledge, he will seldom find his place, the best one where the need and his own capacity are concerned (he is unaware of both more often than not).

¹³No one can be an initiate without constantly expanding and deepening his understanding, unceasingly gathering new knowledge that must be transmuted into practical wisdom, esoteric

facts that must take their appropriate place in the life-service of the initiate, new expanses of consciousness being included with the fields of normal experience and expression, whereupon they become the ground for further expansion.

¹⁴A group of disciples being prepared for initiation has to develop and manifest four qualities and abilities in particular: 1) the overcoming of sentimentality in relations between the members of the group, such as liking some members more and other members less; 2) the annihilation of selfish desires which may hamper the work of the group in some way (such as demands for attention, rewards, recognition, etc.) – unselfish people are not rare, unselfish groups are very rare; 3) the ability to work as a hierarchy in a reduced scale through applying the principle of “unity in diversity”; 4) the ability to be silent, implying much more than the mere abstention from unnecessary talk, such as the non-expression of many unsuitable and unnecessary, mechanical personality reactions.